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EXAMINER	
ROBINSON BOYCE, AKIBA K	

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3628	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/679,861	OGG, CRAIG	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	AKIBA K. ROBINSON BOYCE	3628	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *25 September 2008*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-13,15-22 and 29-38* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-13, 15-22 and 29-38* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. Due to communications filed 9/25/08, the following is a final office action. Claims 1, 8, 15, and 29-33 have been amended. Claim 14 has been cancelled. Claims 23-28 have been withdrawn. Claims 1-13, 15-22 and 29-38 are pending in this application and have been examined on the merits. Claims 1-13, 15-22 and 29-38 are rejected as follows. The previous rejection has been maintained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-5, 7-11, 13, and 29-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430.

As per claim 1, Liechti teaches a postage evidencing meter comprising:

an authorization database having an entry, wherein the entry is associated with a user, and the entry includes at least one parameter (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44), wherein the parameter limits an ability of the associated user to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44);

a processor operable to access said authorization database and limit the user's ability to evidence postage using the meter in accordance with the parameter of the entry associated with the user, (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65);

Liechti does not explicitly teach storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users.

Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the meter of Liechti to have included storing a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of

customers. Moreover, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Ryan since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 2, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum postage amount that a user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

As per claim 3, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a period of time during which a user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 4, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes: a maximum postage amount that a user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage over a

selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 5, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the postage evidencing meter further comprising: a user interface (Liechti: Figure 2, "207" and "215"; col. 4, lines 4-10); a printer (Liechti: Figure 2, "250"; col. 4, lines 12-15); and a security module (Liechti: Figure 2, "250"; col. 4, lines 15-17). 25. As per claim 7, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further teaches the authorization database is coupled to the meter via a communication link to a remote postage information system (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 5, lines 5-9 - The Examiner interprets data center 15 to be the remote postage information system.).

As per claim 8, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising: at least one postage evidencing meter comprising a processor, and a communication module for providing a communication link between the postage evidencing meter and a postage information system (Liechti: Figures 1-2; col. 3, lines 46-67 - The Examiner interprets internal modem 205 to be the communication module and data center 15 to be a postage information system.);

wherein the postage information system includes a database for storing at least one postage usage parameter for a user of the meter (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and

"240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44),

wherein the parameter for the user limits an ability of the user associated with said parameter to evidence postage using the meter (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-44); and

wherein the processor is operable to access said database through said communication module to limit the ability of a user to evidence postage in accordance with the associated parameter (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22- 65).

Liechti does not teach separately storing information for each user of a plurality of users.

Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included separately storing information for each user of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage system of

Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Ryan since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 9, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum postage amount that a user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9, "postage amount limit").

As per claim 10, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a period of time during which a user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 11, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that a selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 13, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

As per claim 29, Liechti teaches a method for controlling postage usage comprising:
storing at least one postage usage parameter for a user in a postage usage database (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9), wherein said postage usage parameters establish postage evidencing limits for the user (Liechti: col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9);
receiving a request to evidence postage from a user of said plurality of users(Liechti: col. 7, lines 2-4; col. 12, lines 22-24; col. 13, lines 21-24 - The creation of a user account with postal funds is a request received to evidence postage from a selected user.);
(a) determining, based on the requesting user's postage usage parameter, if sufficient postage is available to fulfill the request for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of terminating the meter's ability to evidence postage when the ascending register reaches the postage amount limit implies that there is a step of determining whether there is sufficient postage to fulfill the request for the selected user. For example, when the postage limit is reached, it is determined that the user does not have sufficient postage available to fulfill a request.);
(b) determining if sufficient postage is available from an available postage balance of a postage meter used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the requesting user

(Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of checking if the ascending register reaches the postage amount limit includes the step of determining if sufficient postage is available.);

evidencing a requested postage amount if said (a) determining is affirmative and if said (b) determining is affirmative (Liechti: col. 2, lines 38-41; col. 7, lines 4-6);

recording postage usage for the requesting user in the postage usage database (Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6; col. 12, lines 22-24); and

deducting an amount of postage used to fulfill the request for the requesting user from the available postage balance (Liechti: col. 7, lines 4-6).

Liechti does not teach separately storing information for each of a plurality of users. 36.

Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the method of Liechti to have included separately storing information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Ryan since the claimed invention is merely a combination

of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

As per claim 30, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches authenticating the requesting user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 34-39).

As per claim 31, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to configure parameters for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 6, lines 62-67; col. 7, lines 1-9); and modifying postage usage limits in the postage usage database (Liechti: column 7, lines 4-9).

As per claim 32, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 31 as described above. Liechti further teaches the usage limit is a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 7, lines 6-9).

As per claim 33, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the method of claim 29 as described above. Liechti further teaches receiving a request to purchase postage for the requesting user (Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24 - The Examiner interprets storing funds on the user's account to imply receiving a request to purchase postage.); and adding a purchased postage value to the postage usage database for the requesting user

(Liechti: col. 12, lines 22-24).

As per claim 34, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least one of time and amount (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 35, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 36, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least one of time and amount (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

As per claim 37, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

4. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430 and further in view of Meadors et al., U.S. Publication No. 2004/0194154.

As per claim 6, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the postage evidencing meter of claim 1 as described above. Liechti further the authorization database (Liechti: Fig. 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Ryan does not

teach a removable storage device.

Meadors teaches a removable storage device (Meadors: paragraph 0006). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the postage evidencing meter of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included a removable storage device as taught by Meadors for the advantage of providing a postage system that is more versatile.

5. Claims 12, 15-22, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liechti et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,715,164 in view of Ryan, JR., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0026430 and further in view of Manduley, U.S. Publication No. 2004/0098354.

As per claim 12, Liechti in view of Ryan teaches the system of claim 8 as described above. Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the communication link is a wireless link.

Manduley teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one

another.

As per claim 15, Liechti teaches a system for controlling postage usage, comprising: at least two postage evidencing meters (Liechti: Fig. 1; col. 3, lines 47-49), each meter having a processor and a communication module for providing a communication link (Liechti: Fig. 2, "201" and "205"; col. 3, lines 58-62), at least one postage evidencing meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters storing at least one postage usage parameter for a user, wherein said postage usage parameters define different postage evidencing limits with respect to the user (Liechti: Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5- 9 and 22-65), wherein at least one postage usage parameter for the user is exchanged via the communication link (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9), and wherein the processor of the meter receiving said postage usage parameter controls an ability of the selected user associated with the postage usage parameter to evidence postage using the receiving meter in accordance with the received postage usage parameter (Liechti: Fig. 1, "103"; Fig. 2, "201"; col. 3, lines 46-67; col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-65).

Liechti does not teach storing separate information for each of a plurality of users; and a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters. 56.

Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti to have included storing separate information for each of a plurality of users as taught by Ryan for the advantage of providing a flexible postage metering system that can process mail for a plurality of customers. Moreover, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include in the postage system of Liechti the ability to store a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users as taught by Ryan since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters.

Manduley teaches a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters (Manduley: paragraph 0039). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan to have included a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the

advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

As per claim 16, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26).

As per claim 17, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameter includes a maximum amount of postage that can be evidenced by the selected user during a selected period of time (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 18, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the parameters include: a maximum postage amount that the selected user is allowed to use on the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 22-26); and a period of time during which the selected user is allowed to use the meter to evidence postage (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9 and 33-55).

As per claim 19, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the

communication link is a wireless link.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is a wireless link (Manduley: paragraph 0039).

It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is a wireless link as taught by Manduley for the advantage of providing a convenient way for postage meters to communicate with one another.

As per claim 20, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the communications link is a wireline link (Liechti: col. 3, lines 50-52).

As per claim 21, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches using cryptographic techniques (Liechti: column 8, lines 17-29). Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters.

Manduley further teaches the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters (Manduley: paragraphs 0030-0031). It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included the communication link is used to transfer postage values securely between the at least two meters as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a remote data center.

As per claim 22, Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley teaches the system of claim 15 as described above. Liechti further teaches the exchange of postage usage parameters (Liechti: column 5, lines 5-9). Liechti in view of Ryan does not teach an exchange between two meters is bi-directional.

Manduley further teaches an exchange between two meters is bi-directional (Manduley: paragraphs 0034-0037 - The Examiner notes, one meter can send funds to another meter and vice versa.). It would have been prima facie obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the system of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley to have included an exchange between two meters is bi-directional as taught by Manduley for the advantage of effectively transmitting and updating data between meters without the need for connecting to a

remote data center.

As per claim 38, Liechti further teaches wherein the at least one parameter comprises at least two parameters (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9).

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments, see remarks/arguments, and amendment, filed 9/25/08, with respect to claims 1-13 and 15-22, 29-38 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection of 1-13, 15-22 and 29-38 has been withdrawn.

7. Applicant's arguments filed 9/25/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

As per claim 1, applicant argues that neither *Liechti* nor *Ryan* nor the combination of cited prior art discloses an authorization database having a plurality of entries, wherein each entry is associated with a user of the plurality of users, and each entry includes at least one parameter, wherein the parameter limits an ability of the associated user to evidence postage using the meter. Applicant argues that while *Ryan*

teaches having a plurality of accounts, it does not teach having a plurality of entries as claimed. Instead, the account files *of Ryan* "correspond[] to the plurality of postage metering systems," wherein the "data center stores reset data in each of the plurality of account files representative of reset activity associated with the plurality of postage metering systems." However, as discussed above in the rejection, Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer (Ryan: Fig. 1, "134"; paragraphs 0022; 0028). These plurality of account files represent the plurality of database entries since in paragraph [0022], Ryan specifically teaches that the account database includes a plurality of customer account files. Applicant also disagrees and notes that *Liechti* does not disclose storing a parameter for individual users of a meter, but rather stores limits for each meter. However, Liechti teaches storing parameters for a user at the meter (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9). However, Ryan teaches storing parameters for each of a plurality of customers in a mailing system (Ryan: paragraphs 0022; 0028). It is the combination of Liechti in view of Ryan that teaches all of the limitations of claim 1.

Applicant makes similar arguments for claim 8 as those of claim 1, and claim 8 is therefore still rejected for the same reasons.

As per claim 29, applicant argues that Liechti does not disclose the limitations," (a) determining, based on the selected user's postage usage parameter, if sufficient postage is available to fulfill the request for the selected user, and (b) determining if sufficient postage is available from the available postage balance of said postage meter

used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the selected user. The Examiner disagrees. Liechti teaches (a) determining, based on the selected user's postage usage parameter, if sufficient postage is available to fulfill the request for the selected user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of terminating the meter's ability to evidence postage when the ascending register reaches the postage amount limit implies that there is a step of determining whether there is sufficient postage to fulfill the request for the selected user. For example, when the postage limit is reached, it is determined that the user does not have sufficient postage available to fulfill a request.) and (b) determining if sufficient postage is available from the available postage balance of said postage meter used for evidencing postage to fulfill the request for the selected user (Liechti: col. 5, lines 22-27; col. 7, lines 1-4 and 14-18; The step of checking if the ascending register reaches the postage amount limit includes the step of determining if sufficient postage is available.

Claims 2-5, 7, 9-11, 13, and 30-37 all depend from base claims 1, 8, and 29, respectively, and thus inherit all limitations of their respective base claim, and for the above reasons claims 2-5, 7, 9-11, 13, and 30-37 are still rejected.

As per claim 6, this claim depends from base claim 1, and thus inherit all limitations of its base claim, and is therefore still rejected for the same reason as discussed with respect to claim 1.

As per claims 12, 15-22 and 38, these claims are still rejected for the same reasons as discussed with respect to base claim 8

As per claim 15, Applicant argues the combination of Liechti and Manduley does not disclose, "a system for controlling postage usage that comprises at least two postage evidencing meters with at least one postage evidencing meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters separately storing at least one postage usage parameter for each use of a plurality of users." However, the combination of Liechti and Manduley discloses this feature. Specifically, in Fig. 1; col. 3, lines 47-49 of Liechti, at least two postage evidencing meters is shown. In addition, Figure 2, "220", "230", and "240"; col. 3, lines 61-66; col. 5, lines 5- 9 and 22-65 of Liechti shows at least one postage evidencing meter of said at least two postage evidencing meters storing at least one postage usage parameter for a user, wherein said postage usage parameters define different postage evidencing limits with respect to the user. Although true that Liechti does not disclose storing separate information for each of a plurality of users; and a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters, examiner introduced Ryan to show this feature. Specifically, Ryan teaches storing a plurality of customer account files in an account database in a mailpiece processing system wherein each account file is associated with a different customer as shown in Fig. 1, "134" and paragraphs 0022; 0028, which, in combination with Liechti suggests storing separate information for each of a plurality of users; and a communication link that allows for the exchange of information between at least two meters. Applicant further argues, "Liechti does not store a parameter for each user, but rather stores limits for each meter." The Examiner notes, Liechti teaches storing parameters for a user at the meter (Liechti: col. 5, lines 5-9). Ryan teaches storing

parameters for each of a plurality of customers in a mailing system (Ryan: paragraphs 0022; 0028). It is the combination of Liechti in view of Ryan and further in view of Manduley that teaches all of the limitations of claim 15.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Akiba K Robinson-Boyce whose telephone number is 571-272-6734. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the •Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system, Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO

Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

A. R. B.
January 1, 2009

/Akiba K Robinson-Boyce/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628